

Music of the Masters



*Artists
Edition*



WITCHES DANCE



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Columbian Conservatory of Music

Intermediate Course

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL.

Born in New York, Dec. 18, 1861. Died, 1908.



EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL was the most highly gifted, interesting and successful American composer who has yet appeared. Born in New York City in 1861, he began to show his unconquerable fondness for music at a very early age, and before he was eight his music lessons began under a friend of the family, Mr. Buitrago. The lessons encountered an unforeseen and very unusual difficulty; it was impossible to make the boy practice the lesson assigned, except when he was supervised by some person of authority; because he preferred to spend his time at the piano in composing melodies of his own, improvising short pieces and searching for novel forms of melody and harmony, about which he had as yet no right to know anything. This sort of thing went on for several years, and the attention of that highly gifted musician and artist, the then Miss Teresa Careño, was called to the boy. She was delighted with his talents and his promise; the more, no doubt, because young MacDowell had already a charming personality, full of wit and pleasant fancy.

At length, at the age of fifteen, he was taken to Paris to study, probably by the influence of Careño and the example of Gottschalk, then only recently dead. He was placed under Marmontel, the prominent piano teacher of the Paris Conservatory, and of Savard in theory. During this part of MacDowell's career, it happened that Nicholas Rubinstein (younger brother of the more famous Anton), came to Paris to play, his main performance being the then new Concerto by Tschaiakowsky. Naturally the new work and the splendid playing of the gifted Russian thoroughly awakened MacDowell and several other talented students to the conviction that they were as yet on a wrong road. Never, declared MacDowell, could the teaching they were receiving in Paris result in playing like this from Russia. Accordingly they wished to go to Russia to study with Rubinstein; but various considerations prevailed later on to send the American student to Germany, where he spent a few months at Stuttgart, a school then much recommended by Liszt (and a singularly unproductive school it was!); and later to Frankfort, where MacDowell studied with Karl Heymann, a pianist of most beautiful lightness and delicate fancy. Many passages in his later composition, "The Witches' Dance" remind one of Heymann's art, among its most favorable examples being Heymann's piano piece called "El-finspiel" ("The Play of Elves").

At Frankfort, MacDowell fell directly and naturally under the influence of the celebrated composer, Joachim Raff, with whom he pursued his studies in composition. And, through the recommendation of Raff, Liszt himself was induced to give the already numerous compositions of the young American composer an examination—and this resulted in Raff and Liszt together securing for the young pianist the opportunity of playing at the General German Music Society festival, given in 1882, at Zurich, in Switzerland. MacDowell played there his first Suite, and with great success. Afterwards he appeared in many German concerts, and always with distinction.

After the death of Raff, in 1882, MacDowell removed to Wiesbaden, where he continued a principal piano teacher in the conservatory for three years or more. Here he married Miss Nevins, of New York, in 1884. In 1888 he returned to America, locating in Boston; where he was hailed with joy, and where he continued to teach, compose, and luxuriate in the brilliant literary and musical society of that city. MacDowell dearly loved to joke, even if at his own expense. For example, it happened that one day he was grinding a young lady student from Maine in some of his own studies, which she had been working at for some weeks, and of which she was thoroughly tired. At length, despairing of breaking through the crust of indifference, he leaned back in his chair and remarked: "I am afraid that you do not like these studies of mine?" To which the unexpected answer was given: Much italicized in delivery: "*I perfectly despise them!*" MacDowell shouted with laughter, and that evening told the story at the St. Botolph Club, only to have another musician present publish the name of the frank young woman; for the musician was teaching her harmony, and he knew her ways.

MacDowell was a delightful story-teller, and owing to his wide range of information and his diversified experiences, he was dearly loved by the more gifted literary and artistic members of this very select club. His society was in great demand.

In contrast to this social attractiveness, his music was even then inspired not by society, but by the aspects of nature as seen in the quiet of solitary life in the woods. Nearly all his published works had, either ostensibly or within himself, some aspect of nature as their inspiration and explanation. To satisfy this love of nature and solitude, MacDowell acquired an estate in New Hampshire, an abandoned farm, where he used to spend his summers. He built himself a little log cabin in the woods, some distance from the house, along by a babbling brook. Here he composed, devoting his entire vacation to the work. He was also a poet, refined and rhythmic in versification, and loved better to write his own verses for songs than to set those of other poets.

While still in Germany, MacDowell had defined the range of his talents. He had composed ambitious works for orchestra, many songs (often to his own poetry), many graphic piano pieces, each with a title giving a clew to the mood or scene he had in mind, and much music for other combinations of instruments. He had lived in close intimacy with Raff, who was then one of the most gifted composers living. He had worked and reflected, and he produced works continually increasing in charm and beauty of style.

In 1896 he was sent for from New York to talk over an invitation to become professor of music in Columbia University. President Low, meaning to do a handsome thing for the ambitious young composer offered him the salary of a "full professor," a matter of three or four thousand dollars a year. What was his astonishment to hear it declined without farther time, with the additional statement that he was earning upwards of \$7,000 a year in Boston. It was then time for President Low to experience a sensation of surprise—which he promptly did. Later on a woman came to the rescue and a salary was provided and MacDowell took up his work at Columbia.

In this field he did not find things so pleasant as he had hoped. Circumstances were against him. A student body of nearly or quite four thousand, mostly scattered about in private boarding places in a very large city, is about the least united body possible; and the lectures and recitals of the gifted professor were attended largely by his own students and friends, and those specializing seriously in music; but the student body as a whole remained as remote and inaccessible as if located on another planet.

Nevertheless, he went on composing and devoted all his spare money to getting his compositions in print. At length, in 1896, or late in 1895, he had the misfortune to be knocked down by a cab, as he was crossing the street; one wheel of the cab passed over his neck, inflicting a nerve lesion, which presently resulted in paralysis, from which he died in 1908. There is every reason to believe that if MacDowell had been permitted to live out his expected span of life, he would have gone on to produce many other works of even greater beauty than those we have from his pen. The list, however, is already long and rich in every musical direction. It contains six large compositions for orchestra, two concertos for piano and orchestra, a very long list of piano works in all styles, from his four large and ambitious Sonatas, down to the simple and heart-touching "Woodland Sketches," his graphic and noble "Sea Pieces," his "New England Idylls," "Forest Idylls," "Marionettes" and the like. Also forty-two songs, and many part-songs and choruses. These compositions, by no means equal in merit, contain a large number of such beauty and charm that they appear destined to remain American Classics—a department of art which as yet, has far to go.

MacDowell was the first American composer to attain an elegant and masterly style, a free flow of ideas, and a wide range of media in working them out, as distinguished from writing merely pieces for the piano.

HISTORICAL SKETCH—"THE WITCHES' DANCE," Op. 17, No. 2,

BY EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL.

THE POETIC IDEA.

A Witch, according to the folk-superstitions of all nations, was originally a woman of remarkable charm or wisdom. Later, especially in mediæval and Puritan times, the witch was supposed to derive her charm and wit from Satan himself, whose agent she was. The witch in English mythology had power to transform herself, at dusk, into a cat or other animal. She could fly abroad in the night, riding upon her broomstick. Gatherings of witches were supposed to be held upon remote hill-tops, where they danced and revelled, brewed their magic potions and enjoyed themselves until dawn approached, when, lo! riding upon their broomsticks they betook themselves homeward.

This "Witches' Dance" evidently is a picture of such a gathering, and this is the reason of its speed, its strange harmonies, and its unusual incidents. As the witches were gifted with supernatural power, they did not make mistakes, break in time, or fail to come in at the right moment, as lesser

folks often do. For this reason the "Witches' Dance" should be practiced until it goes perfectly, after the skill and witchery of those whose revels it represents.

FORM-ANALYSIS—"THE WITCHES' DANCE," Op. 17, No. 2, BY EDWARD A. MacDOWELL.

FORM AND STRUCTURE.

The general form of this piece is that which is known as a "Song-Form with Trio." In other words, a main division consisting of the principal melodic musical effects of the piece, extending from Melody A, to the close of Melody D, in m. 83. Then comes the Trio, or "middle piece," consisting of Melodies E, F, and G, ending in m. 176. At this point Melody A begins again, somewhat pruned of its extra matter, giving us Melodies H and I, and a very lovely Coda, or finishing piece, consisting of Melodies J, K, L.

The musical periods (or sentences) are quite a bit longer than usual, but the extensions are easily understood if carefully studied. For example, take Melody A. Here it is easy to see at a glance that ms. 1 to 4 form the first phrase or musical idea; ms. 5, 6, 7, 8, form the second phrase; ms. 9, 10, 11, 12, the third phrase; and ms. 13, 14, 15, 16 the fourth phrase, ending with the chord of F# in m. 17. This is the actual grammatical end of the musical sentence. But let us see what now happens: Notice that the right hand in ms. 17, 18, 21, 22 lingers on F#, the accessory tones G and E# being merely used in order to keep up the "motion" of 16ths. Measure 18 has a different chord in the left hand, but in m. 19 it is again the chord of F#; a new chord in m. 20, but the chord of F# in m. 21; a new chord in m. 22, but F# again in m. 23; a new chord in m. 24, but F# again in m. 25. All this therefore, from m. 18 to 25 is simply what musicians call a "prolongation of the cadence"; that is to say, each measure with odd number is the chord of F#, and each measure of even number is an "off chord," not logically needed, but employed in order to emphasize the repetition of the chord of F#.

A like process of prolonging the cadence goes on throughout Melody B, all of which, from m. 26 to m. 40 consists of the chord of F#, relieved in this instance by two intervening chords. The simplified form of this period is given below in the directions for study. (Example c).

Melody C, has for its object to keep things going until a suitable time for bringing back the first melody; that is to say from m. 41 to m. 60. In this melody the structural units are of two measures each, as you will immediately recognize by playing the left hand alone, when it will be seen that ms. 41, 42 form one idea; ms. 43, 44 another; ms. 45, 46 another, and so on to 53, where again we come back to our old friend, the chord of F#. Then in m. 54 we have a changing chord, and in m. 55, F# again, as also in ms. 57, 59 and 60.

In m. 61 Melody D begins, practically the repetition of Melody A, but closing differently, now upon its own principal key of B minor, in ms. 77, 81, and 83. Measure 84 is simply a bridge to connect us with the new melody, which enters in the key of G, in m. 85.

Melody D is therefore practically the same in sense as Melody A, only led to a more complete close in its own key. This gives new matter to study in various places, with many changes in the right hand part, even where the bass remains the same. Therefore, to most students Melody D will require to be studied like an entirely new melody.

THE MIDDLE PIECE.

The "Middle Piece," or "Trio" has a quiet melody in much slower motion, six of the 16ths running to one of these melody notes. The left hand part, however, keeps up the 16th note motion, and in ms. 105 to 108, and 113 to 116 both hands co-operate in 16ths. Melody F is the same as Melody E, but treated differently. In ms. 133 to 140 the left hand part suggests the beginning of the piece, more and more, but after the burst of excitement in ms. 141 to 144, the quiet form of the melody returns in m. 145 and in ms. 161 to 176 we have a prolongation of the cadence, closing finally upon our old friend, the chord of F#, in m. 176. Then the first melody comes back, ms. 177 to 204. Melody I again is substantially the same as Melody C, but with cadence still more prolonged, ending in m. 232. In m. 233 Melody J is introduced, and this begins the Coda, or closing piece. The melody is in the tenor voice, the same melody as E, but now in the key of B major, closing in m. 253, where a lovely recitative is introduced, like the voice of a new speaker, lasting until m. 258, and then in m. 259 begins the final rush to the close; this part is to be played as fast as possible and play it well.

Such is the general idea.

The "Witch" suggestion in this piece lies in the uncanny speed, the unusual harmonies, the sense of a dancing or flying lightness, as if poised in the high air, far above the solid earth.

DIRECTIONS FOR INTELLIGENT STUDY. First let us get to the bottom of ms. 1 to 4. Note that the fifth in the bass is sounded once and held during the four measures. The proper way to do this is to take the "tone-sustaining pedal" (the middle pedal on your piano, if it has three pedals) while your fingers are still upon the keys. The tone-sustaining pedal will hold up the dampers which are up at the moment you take it, and keep them up until you release the pedal. Note carefully: Take this pedal in this instance with the (it is more usually taken with the left) right foot, and if you like you can also hold down the soft pedal with the left foot. In this way you can get the distant and mysterious effect intended.

Now for the plan of the melody in these four measures: The structural skeleton you will find in Example A below. Play it, then play m. 1 as written in Example B. Note that the G in the right hand is what is called a "changing note"; that is, a dissonant tone (not belonging to the chord) which you go off to and come back where you were. Changing notes are almost invariably a step or half step away only from the principal note upon which they depend. So also in each of these four measures the second 16th note is a changing note, adjacent to the soprano tone. Now look at the 5th note, which the left hand plays in m. 1. If you refer to Example A you will see that your principal note here is F \sharp . This G is sounded upon the beat (the count) and is a half step away from the principal note. It is called an *Appoggiatura* (äp-pôd-jä-too-rä, the main accent falling upon the "too," but also a lesser accent upon the "pod"), in other words it is a "leaning note," leaning upon its principal, which always follows it.

Therefore, to remember these four measures, first learn the substance of them, as written out in full in Example A; then cut up your cloth into the 16th-note motion and you have it. You see the changing note and the appoggiatura come in by routine; what you have to remember is the succession of chords in Example A.

The melody of the second phrase, ms. 5 to 8, is easily learned. Begin by learning the melody of m. 5. Note that it is the scale of B minor, from B up to F \sharp , then skip up to B. Measure 6 in precisely the same octave higher. Measure 7 is the chromatic scale up from B \sharp to ending upon F \sharp , m. 8, where the right hand stands over the first three notes, and then comes down and stands over the last three notes. You change the hand position while you are upon the third note, the F \sharp .

It is the left hand part of this phrase which will make you the most trouble, because the fingering needs to be observed as marked. In m. 5 you have the chord of B Minor; place the 5th finger on the B. The same again in m. 6, where you have precisely the same chords. Learn these two chords to play them easily. When this is done, then place the bass before them; A in m. 5 and G \sharp in m. 6. In m. 7, you have the seventh-chord of C \sharp . Begin by placing your 5th finger on G \sharp , and play the two chords, without moving the hand away from this 5th finger landmark on G \sharp . From this position the next chord, F \sharp is easy. It covers a 10th; you may play the notes absolutely together if you happen to have a hand capable of reaching it; but if not you "spread" the chord, beginning its lower tone just ahead of the time, so as to reach the top A \sharp on the beat.

When you have come this far, then it will be time to learn each measure in its turn, the two hands together; and then the four in succession; and then play the eight measures in their order as written. You will save a lot of time by memorizing as fast as you go. Because the difficulties in this piece are two; First, to know precisely *what* you have to play, and with what fingers; and, second, to be able to get there fast enough. The last depends partly upon the first, and partly upon the spryness and pianistic cleverness of your right hand.

In the third phrase the structural unit is of two measures, as you will see by playing the left hand alone. Measures 9 and 10 are positions of the chord of E minor; ms. 11, 12 positions of the chord of B minor; then we eat sweetheats with a spoon, while we are resting upon the bass tone C \sharp , the melody being in the upper tones of the left hand. In m. 16 there is a small 2 below the bass. This means that the measure is intended to be divided into two equal parts, the second C \sharp coming in with the 4th sixteenth note in the right hand. It is a mere freak; one of the witches happened to miss her count.

The right hand part in ms. 13 to 16 consists of the figure of four notes beginning with E \sharp , repeated over and over as shown by the brackets under the notes in the music. Therefore all you have to do is to learn these four notes, and then learn to keep them going right along, regardless of the counting, which will bring the E \sharp alternately upon the second count and upon the first. In all this music, throughout this piece, you steer largely by the bass. The harmony is the main thing, because the accents and the figures employed in the motion depend upon it.

Melody B is practically standing still upon the chord of F \sharp . The melodic units are of four measures, as in Example C and Example D. The same in the succeeding four measures, ms. 34 to 37. In m. 38 the left hand covers a ninth, as shown in Example E. The foregoing manner of practicing, if diligently applied, will take you as far as m. 77, where you have what is often called an "interlocking" passage, in which a single idea is carried forwards by the two hands alternately, or in pairs. In order to realize the effect intended in ms. 77 to 81, play the soprano voice a few times through with right hand alone, making it a melodic run, the left hand meantime playing the voice below it. Look

WITCHES' DANCE

5

out for the A \sharp in the second beat of m. 77, the E \sharp at the end of m. 78, and in general the accidental when it occurs a second time in the same measure but is not written again. In playing this passage with both hands, be sure that the melody goes just as smoothly as when it is played continuously by one hand. In ms. 105 to 108, the alternation of C double sharp and D \sharp , is to have the effect of a trill. (Quasi trillo—"like a trill.")

In melody K the time is changed to one very much slower, the quarter note here going at about the rate of 40 per minute. Treat it as a solo singer would, without slavery to the "beat." From m. 258 on, as fast as possible.

If assigned as a study in the fifth grade, the "Witches' Dance" will require several weeks' practice before it can be played smoothly and with expression as marked. But it is a very useful study and a charming and unusual piece when played. Therefore, take a good hold and keep hold; it is bound to come out.

W. S. B. MATHEWS, Editor

The musical score consists of five sections labeled A through E, written in a key with two sharps (F# and C#).

- Section A:** A piano accompaniment in treble and bass staves. The bass line features a series of eighth-note chords, while the treble line has block chords.
- Section B:** A short melodic fragment on a single staff, consisting of a few eighth notes.
- Section C:** A melodic line on a single staff, marked with measure numbers 26, 27, 28, and 29. It includes a fermata over the final measure.
- Section D:** A melodic line on a single staff, continuing from section C with a fermata.
- Section E:** A melodic line on a single staff, marked with a fermata and the letter 'L' below it.

WITCHES' DANCE.

Hexentanz.

1

Edited by W. S. B. Mathews.

E. A. MACDOWELL,
Op. 17, No 2.

Presto. ♩ = 126

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time, key of D major. It begins with a tempo marking of Presto (♩ = 126). The score is divided into five systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass). The measures are numbered 1 through 25. The first system (measures 1-5) includes a section marked 'A' and a dynamic of *pp leggiero*. The second system (measures 6-10) includes a dynamic of *p*. The third system (measures 11-15) includes a dynamic of *pp leggiero*. The fourth system (measures 16-20) includes a dynamic of *cresc.*. The fifth system (measures 21-25) includes a dynamic of *cresc.*. The score is marked with various musical notations, including slurs, ties, and fingerings.

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2 **B**

26 *stacc* 27 28 29 30 *simile*

31 32 33 *mf* 34 *mf* 35 *sempre*

36 *cresc* 37 38 39 40

C

41 *pp leggieriss.* 42 43 44 45

46 47 48 49 50

51 52 53 54 55

Witches' Dance, 9

8

56 *f* 57 58 59 *p dim* 60

8

pp 61 62 63 64 65

8

66 67 68 69 70 *cresc.*

71 72 *sempre cresc.* 73 74

leggeriss. 75 76 77 78

79 *dim* 80 81 *pp* 82 *R.* 83 84

E

85 *ppp con 2 Ped.* 86 87 88 89 90

il basso non legato e molto leggero

91 92 93 94 *poco a poco cresc.* 95 96

97 98 99 100 *p* 101 102

quasi trillo

103 104 *cresc.* 105 106 107 108

109 *senza 2 Ped.* 110 111 112 *martellato* *f* 113 114

F *a tempo*

115 *poco rall* 116 117 118 *ff e marcato fortissimo e martellato* 119 120 121

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. The first system (measures 85-90) is in E major and features a piano introduction with a double pedal. The second system (measures 91-96) continues the piano texture with a gradual crescendo. The third system (measures 97-102) includes a piano dynamic marking and a quasi-trill effect. The fourth system (measures 103-108) features a trill and a crescendo. The fifth system (measures 109-114) includes a section without the second pedal and a martellato (hammered) section starting at measure 113. The sixth system (measures 115-121) is in F major, marked 'a tempo', and includes a 'poco rall' section followed by a fortissimo, marcato, and martellato section.

8 5

122 123 124 125 126 127 128 *cresc.* 129

8 *stacc.* *leggiro* 133 134 135 136

137 138 139 140 *f* *ff* *martellato* 141 142

G 143 144 145 *pp dolce* 146 147 148 *leggiro e non legato*

149 150 151 152 153 *sempre p* 154

155 156 *poco a poco* *rit.* 157 158 *dolciss. molto* *rit.* 160

a tempo

Musical score for "Witches' Dance, 9". The score is written for piano and features a variety of musical notations including treble and bass staves, dynamic markings, and articulation symbols. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked *a tempo*. The score is divided into measures numbered 161 through 192.

Key musical elements and markings include:

- Measures 161-165:** Marked *legg.* (leggiero), *p* (piano), and *f* (forte). Includes triplets and slurs.
- Measures 166-171:** Marked *f* (forte). Includes triplets and slurs.
- Measures 172-177:** Marked *f* (forte), *fz* (forzando), and *pp* (pianissimo). Includes a half note (H) and *leggiero*.
- Measures 178-182:** Marked *cresc.* (crescendo) and *stacc.* (staccato).
- Measures 183-187:** Marked *p* (piano). Includes triplets and slurs.
- Measures 188-192:** Marked *pp* (pianissimo) and *leggiero*.

7

193 194 195 196 197

8 198 199 200 201 202

8 203 204 205 *pp leggiero* 206 207

208 209 210 211 212

213 214 215 216 217

218 *poco cresc* 219 220 221 *sempre cresc* 222

8

223 224 *f* 225 226 227

8

228 229 230 231 *poco rull* 232

8

233 234 235 236 237

8

238 239 240 241 242

8

243 244 245 *poco a poco* 246 *dim.* 247

8

248 249 *pp* 250 251 252

a piacere (Andante)

253 *ppp quasi recit* 254 255 256 257 *rit.*

Prestissimo. (♩ = 152)

8

258 *al lento* 259 *pp leggeriss.* 260 261 *quasi trillo* 262

263 264 265 *simile* 266 267 268

269 270 271 *ppp* 272 273 274



Columbian Conservatory of Music

Intermediate Course

RECITATION QUESTIONS—"THE WITCHES' DANCE," Op. 17, No. 2,

BY EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL.

1. What is the general style of this piece? Fast or Slow? Strange or Commonplace?
Ans.
2. What is its idea?
Ans.
3. What is the Key of the first part? What of the Middle Piece?
Ans.
4. How many measures are there in Melody A?
Ans.
5. Is this more or less than you usually find in a single musical melody?
Ans.
6. In what other places does the first phrase occur? And in which places is it changed in any way from this form in ms. 1 to 4.
Ans.
7. Which part of the piece made you the most trouble to play it smoothly?
Ans.
8. Where is the last place in which the melody E occurs, and in what key?
Ans.

(For teacher's notation only.)

Date Received

Name

Corrected by

Address

Grade (scale of 100)

Pupil's Number

